

Messenger and Visitor

The Maritime Baptist Publishing Company, Ltd.

Publishers and Proprietors

TERMS } \$2.00 PER ANNUM.
\$1.50 IF PAID IN ADVANCE.

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85 Germain Street, St. John, N. B.

Printed by PATERSON & CO., 92 Germain St.

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Editorial Notes.

—In order that the American Baptist Missionary Union shall come to the close of its financial year on April first without a deficit, it is necessary that \$185,000 be received during the current month. This means receipts exceeding the average of recent years by about \$45,000. But business is said to be better in the States this year than for some years past, and Secretary Mabie is not without hope that the receipts for the month may be sufficient to balance the account.

—It is stated that Dr. Taylor, of Vassar, has declined the call to the presidency of Brown. But if the overture of the trustees of Brown is without result so far as their own University is concerned, it appears to have had a remarkably favorable effect upon Vassar. It is reported that there is a good prospect that \$2,000,000 may shortly be added to its endowment, so that the president of Vassar shall have at command ample means for work of the highest and most advanced character. The call of Dr. Taylor to Brown has perhaps also led to a higher appreciation of his value to Vassar. At all events it is said that his salary is to be increased and made equal to that given by any other American College.

—“Nobody can be sure that demons do not exist, therefore you take them for granted.” Thus our friend, ‘Medicus,’ would dispose of our argument against his position that belief in demoniacal possession is absurd. But in this ‘Medicus’ can scarcely expect to be taken seriously. Our argument was that, since we do not know enough concerning modes of existence in the super-sensuous world to deny the existence of demons and their possible influence upon human beings, it would be rash to pronounce absurd a theory of demoniacal possession, which plainly appears to have the endorsement of the writers of the Gospels and of Jesus himself. ‘Medicus’ declares that he must have a demon for critical examination before he will believe in its existence. It is quite possible that he will not be able to get hold of such a subject. But then, it is not likely that he can secure for critical examination an angel or the spirit of a just man made perfect, or that he will be able to verify by scientific investigation the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, so that our friend seems to be in a fair way to become a pretty thorough-going Sadducee.

—In connection with the Federation of Free churches in Great Britain, a Year Book has been issued which affords interesting data for statistical comparison between the Free churches and the Anglican church. For the table of comparison and other facts given below we are indebted to the Outlook. The figures are for England and Wales only.

| | Evangelical Free Churches. | Anglican Churches. |
|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Sittings. | 7,848,804 | 6,886,927 |
| Members. | 1,879,175 | 1,886,059 |
| Teachers. | 381,153 | 219,159 |
| Scholars. | 3,284,963 | 2,393,372 |
| Pastors. | 8,802 | 22,876 |
| Local Preachers. | 49,970 | |

The increase in membership for the year is 2,000 greater in the Free churches than in the Established church. The ordinary income of the Free churches is estimated to be between five and six millions sterling, and the value of church property fifty millions. In the English-speaking countries and their

missions the Free church members number twenty-one millions and the Anglicans three and a quarter millions. These figures show that, without taking account of the Roman Catholics and Unitarians, the Anglicans in England and Wales are considerably out-numbered by the Nonconformists, and they show that it is not from any superiority in numbers and religious activity that the Anglican body can lay claim to the right of establishment in England.

—The people inhabiting the Philippine Islands are of many different tribes and languages. The principal of these languages, as enumerated by Dr. B. Pick, in the ‘Independent,’ are the Calamian, Ibanag, Zambal, Pampango, Pangasinan, Vicol or Bicol, Cebuan, Tagalog and Visayan. The last named is spoken by about 2,000,000 and is common to most of the central portions of the archipelago. Tagalog, which is spoken by 1,500,000, is the predominant language of the Philippines and is the chief language of Manila. The Spanish Roman Catholic missionaries appear to have published grammars of most of the languages, and in some of them there are translations of portions of the Scriptures. Thus in Tagalog the Gospels of Luke and Mark have been published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the Gospel of Matthew is in press. In Pangasinan the New Testament has been translated by the Dominican Friar Alonzo Lallave, and the Gospels, the Acts and one of John’s epistles were published in 1887 by the B. & F. Society. A translation of the Gospel of Luke in the Vicol language is now in press, and the same gospel is in course of translation in the Ilocan language. There are nearly half a million people in the Philippines who use the Spanish language.

Christ the Door and the Good Shepherd.

In that passage from the chapter of John’s Gospel which constitutes our Bible lesson for the current week, our Lord sets forth his relations to his people under two figures, both having reference to the shepherd life of Palestine, and therefore quite familiar to those whom he addressed. In the first figure he is the Door of the sheepfold; in the second he is the Shepherd of the sheep. Both figures are wonderfully expressive of the character of the relationships which Christ sustains to men. In order to feel the full force of the figures it is necessary to have some knowledge of shepherd life in the East, with its perils to flock and shepherd from wild beasts and robbers, the necessity of frequently moving to new pasture grounds, the constant demand for knowledge, watchfulness and courage on the part of the shepherd, and the need too of the sheepfold, in which during the night the flocks may find a secure refuge from their enemies. The fold, travellers tell us, is ordinarily an open enclosure, with a wall high enough to prevent wolves and jackals from leaping it, and covered over with branches of thorny shrubs. One such fold serves for a large district, and several shepherds may bring their flocks to it at night. The sheep of each flock are carefully counted one by one, as they enter, and all night the porter of the fold guards it, refusing entrance to any but a real shepherd of the sheep. In the morning the shepherds come. Each calls his own sheep and leads them forth. The sheep recognize the voice of their own shepherd, and a stranger they will not follow.

It is of great importance to recognize clearly the truth that Christ is the Door, both for shepherd and for sheep. It is by him that every true shepherd finds access to the sheepfold. If any one ignores the Door and climbs up some other way, it is proof that he is no true shepherd. Only he who comes in the name of Christ and to whom Christ is Lord of all can be a shepherd of the sheep. He who climbs up some other way, whatever may be his pretensions and his powers, the same is a thief and a robber. And, as Christ is the only door for the shepherds, so also is he the only door for the sheep. It is a way too straight and narrow for the soul swollen with pride or laden with much goods. Christ is the true and only entrance to the fold, and he who really enters by him shall find a place of safety, and, going in and out, shall find pasture. It is by Christ and not by any ordinance that the fold is entered. And they who enter are his, all of them, although it may be they are found huddled together in separate flocks in different corners of the sheep-fold. To

know Christ and the power of his resurrection is of far greater importance than to be able to pronounce any sectarian shibboleth. The question of the believer’s relationship to Christ infinitely outweighs the question of his attitude toward Paul, Cephas or Apollos.

In the other figure alluded to above our Lord speaks of himself as a Shepherd, “the good Shepherd,” that is one who pre-eminently possesses the qualities which belong to the true, the ideal shepherd,—one who in his relation to men realizes the relation of the ideal shepherd to his sheep. As the good shepherd, he appears in contrast to three kinds of men—typified by the wolf, the robber and the hireling. The wolf we may take as the type of the lustful and avaricious man who cares not what or who is sacrificed to his wolfish appetites, so long as they are gratified. The thief or the robber type is like the wolf type in being actuated by selfish greed, less savage in outward appearance than the other, but no less an enemy to the flock and to the shepherd. Then there is also the hireling, who is unlike the others in that his purpose is not to rend, to kill and to destroy, but still like them and unlike the good shepherd, because his purpose is a selfish one and without any inspiration of love. These three classes had their representatives in the days of Christ and they are not far to seek today. Probably if any one will closely regard his own features in the light of Christ’s teaching he will be able to discern there some wolfish lineaments, and some that clearly indicate relationship with the robber and the hireling.

It will be observed that our Lord particularly contrasts the character of the good shepherd with that of the hireling. Not every man indeed who works for wages is really a hireling. Many an one who serves his fellow man, and receives pay therefor, renders that service as unto God, and does his work “as ever in his Great Taskmaster’s eye.” And the mere hireling may render much valuable service, doing just what he has agreed to do, but with no higher motive in it than to receive the promised wages and to retain custom. The hireling does many things for us, but there are many most important things which he does not and cannot do. No hireling can take the place in the family of the dead father or mother, of the dead wife or husband. We cannot hire men to be patriots. Perhaps there are hirelings in civic councils, in Legislatures, in Parliaments and Governments, but it is a truism to say that no hireling can render the service which the interests of the country demands from men in such positions. Perhaps the hireling sometimes finds his way even into the Christian ministry, but surely no minister can be hired to render the service which a pastor of a church must give if he has any fellowship with Christ. It would go hard with the world if there were none to render greater service than the hireling can give. For the world needs to be loved and saved, and the hireling could never be a saviour because he is not a lover, and will not lay down his life for any cause. He who would save must love. Jesus could be the Good Shepherd because he was willing to lay down his life for men. He could be the Saviour of the world because of love. What the world wants most today is less hirelings and more shepherds, more men and women who care less for the pay which the world gives to those who cater to its wants and whims and more for the “well done” with which the Master shall greet the good and faithful servant by and by.

Arrows from a Hunter’s Quiver.

MONEY VERSES SOULS.

It is evident that religious work today requires three things,—“grace, grit and greenbacks,” or it will not go. But the reading of “annual reports” reveals the possibility of a greater anxiety to have the balance on the right side of the ledger than to report a number of souls saved. “How is your church prospering?” “Splendidly,” said the treasurer, “all bills are paid and there is a balance in the treasury.” “But how many souls were saved during the year?” “Let me see,” was the response. “Well, that is hard to tell, but I—I—don’t know of any still we have had a good year.” Christ stands over against the treasury, but money won’t buy souls from death!

THE CHURCH AND THE MASSES.

In many places is heard the wail, “The church is drifting away from the masses!” That may be true of carnal societies which ignore their kindred, but it is not